

8th ESCMID Summer School 2009

Course Review

Luísa Peixe and Raquel Tavares
Directors of the 8th ESCMID Summer School, Porto, Portugal
lpeixe@ff.up.pt, raquelmrtavares@gmail.com



The 8th ESCMID Summer School took place for the first time in Porto, Portugal, on 11-17 July 2009. Every year the ESCMID Education Subcommittee organizes the Summer School in a different country with the collaboration of local directors. Luísa Peixe and Raquel Tavares have coordinated this year's event in Portugal along with the secretariat support of Ana Freitas. Among the local (9) and international speakers (5) were Javier Garau (Barcelona, Spain), Fernando Baquero (Madrid, Spain), Laurent Poirel (Paris, France), José Cabeda (Porto, Portugal) and Rui Medeiros (Porto, Portugal).

Similar to previous years, the Summer School maintained its general structure: The course included 5 state-of-the-art lectures, 12 shorter educational lectures, 3 pro/con sessions, in which selected students presented pro and contra arguments on a specific topic and discussed them with the experts and the other students, 36 student case presentations and 4 small-group tutorial sessions. The educational material from this event will be included as it becomes available in the ESCMID Online Lecture Library in the coming weeks. Visit www.escmid.org/OLL for details.

This year the Summer School organizers received a record number of applications (close to 100 applicants from 20 countries) among whom a maximum of 60 were chosen so as to maintain the interactive set-up. Ten of these participants received an attendance grant from ESCMID.

Additional financial support was provided as unrestricted educational grants by Portuguese branches of Boehringer–Ingelheim, GlaxoSmithKline, Gilead, Pfizer, Tibotec-Jansen Cilag, Merck Sharp & Dohme and Portuguese institutions: INFARMED, Câmara do Porto/Gabinete de Turismo and Associação Nacional de Farmácias (ANF).

The Summer School experience goes beyond the educational value alone. It also offers social and cultural opportunities. Situated on the north bank of the River Douro, the city of Porto is famous for the exceptional quality of its historical centre, classified as World Cultural Heritage. Most participants stayed in the city centre of Porto, near to hot spots with a rich and diverse offering of cultural activities.

After the opening ceremony and welcome reception, the participants were hosted at a welcome dinner in a Porto wine cellar and entertained by a Fado singer. On Tuesday afternoon, following a guided city tour through the historical centre, participants enjoyed an exciting jetboat ride along the river Douro. The day ended in a charming seaside restaurant with the opportunity to taste traditional Portuguese food.

The 8th ESCMID Summer School, as its predecessors, proved again to be a successful concept, due to the atmosphere created among all participants, the organizers, the speakers and the facilitators, which contributed to a high quality and highly interactive Summer School in a relaxing atmosphere.

This kind of event acts as an important stimulus to the collaboration and interaction of professionals and scientists from different countries and cultures. We hope that all participants will remember the Summer School as a week rich in professional, cultural and social experiences. With their input we are working on another challenging edition of the Summer School 2010 in Turkey.

Student impressions from the 8th Summer School

“We think that this conception of Summer School is great!”

“We really enjoyed the high quality of all presentations, the beautiful and complex social programme, the competent local support offered by the organizers and staff.”

“The case presentations and Pro/Con sessions are a good opportunity to young scientists to communicate in English, to show how they work and to generate new ideas and thoughts in a friendly environment.”

“We found ESCMID Summer School in Porto very well organized with extremely kind and open-minded organizing staff.”